DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 295 340 EA 020 138

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TITLE Watching a District Change over a Decade with Year Round Education.
PUB DATE Jan 85
NOTE 34p.; Speech given before the Annual Meeting of the National Council on Year-Round Education (16th, Los Angeles, CA, January 25, 1985).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Class Size; Crowding; Elementary Secondary Education; *Enrollment Rate; Enrollment Trends; *Extended School Year; *Program Development; Program Effectiveness; Program Evaluation; Program Implementation; School Construction; *School Districts; School District Spending; *School Size; School Surveys; Vacation Programs; *Year Round Schools
IDENTIFIERS *Colorado (Jefferson County)

ABSTRACT

Enrollment growth and a lack of classroom space influenced the school district of Jefferson County, Colorado, to consider a year-round school program. A study committee decided that a plan called Concept 6 was the most appropriate for addressing local needs. Under Concept 6, there would be six instructional terms; students would attend school for four terms and be on vacation for two terms; students would have access to the whole curriculum all year; three vacation plans would be offered; and 50 percent more classroom space would be provided through balancing the vacation choices of students. In 1972, a survey indicated where the program should be tested and revealed that most parents and practitioners supported the program. Advisory committees advised each other, identified concerns, responded to implementation plans, and helped to distribute information. A central coordinating committee helped coordinate plans for the program. During the pilot program, an evaluation validated the year-round program as an alternative for meeting classroom space needs. Eventually, all K-12 schools in the district adopted the year-round program; then, as enrollment growth receded and the taxpayers' refusal to support school construction ceased, schools started returning to the traditional school calendar. When employing year-round programs, practitioners should communicate their objectives and successes, select staff that will support the program, and obtain administrative support. (RG)

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WATCHING A DISTRICT CHANGE OVER A DECADE WITH YEAR ROUND EDUCATION

Speech to the 16th Annual Meeting of
the National Council on Year-Round Education
January 25, 1985
Los Angeles, California

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by

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INTRODUCTION

The present era of year-round education began in the early 1970's and expanded to a limited degree throughout the nation. The Jefferson County, Colorado year-round school program began in 1974 and in three years' time became one of the nation's largest extended year operations with 37 elementary and secondary schools on the new plan. An unusual aspect of this program from the beginning was the fact that it included elementary, junior high, and senior high schools all on the same calendar and required every school within a feeder system K-12 to be included in the implementation. For this reason a plan called Concept 6 was developed in order to appeal to the needs of both elementary and secondary schools.

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The purpose of this report is to tell how this year-round program was implemented, how it was expanded, and what was learned from the year-round operation over a ten year experience. It should be noted from the beginning that this program was initiated under the direction of the Jefferson County Board of Education as an expedient for saving building space and achieving economy in capital construction costs, for which it proved highly successful. Educational benefits occurred only as outcomes which were not primary objectives. In general teachers supported the year-round program and the majority believed that it offered educational benefits and life style advantages which were not present in conventional school calendars.

CONCEPT SIX YEAR-ROUND SCHOOL PLAN

Expanding enrollments and a shortage of classroom space caused the Jefferson County, Colorado School District to consider year-round operation of schools as a possible solution to its classroom shortage. Several attendance areas in this large metropolitan district were faced with overcrowding at both the elementary and secondary levels in 1971. When citizen committees in local schools were given the opportunity to study the possible options for solving the chronic problem under conditions where the maximum bonded indebtedness had already been reached, they asked for a study of year-round operation of school as a possible solution. This

brought about the formation of a District-wide study committee composed of parents, teachers, students, and administrators who began an exhaustive analysis of feasible extended school year plans. Early in the study it was found that only a handful of school districts considering the year-round plans of operation had actually adopted calendars that would extend the school year beyond nine months for both elementary and secondary levels. When the various plans in operation were analyzed it was concluded that a lack of uniformity existed in year-round operations in K-12 systems because there was a difference between what was acceptable at one level of education and what was uniformly acceptable at all grade levels.

The widely acclaimed success of the voluntary four-quarter plan for secondary schools generated little interest among elementary teachers and the 45-15 plan raised considerable skepticism among the secondary school teachers and principals. Dr. Alton Cowan, Superintendent of the Jefferson County, Colorado, School District, appointed a task force to study the feasibility of a year-round operation in this large K-12 district. A three man study group was composed of principals from elementary, junior, and senior high schools within the system. This task force was charged with the job of thoroughly studying the 45-15 plan and then producing a K-12 conceptual model for implementation as a pilot. After months of intensive study, during which it continually related its findings to the larger committee, the task force came to the same conclusion that others have reached before and that was that any savings in the cost of facilities would soon

be eaten up by increased instructional costs, particularly at the secondary level if the existing quality of instruction was to be maintained. Moreover, the prospect of mandating vacation times to a population of 77,000 students on a pattern that departs radically from existing practice was not received well enough for further consideration. The complexity of scheduling students at staggered 15-day entry times, along with the problems of offering single section elective courses at the junior and senior high schools, began to arouse opposition.

Although a proposal for completely individualized instructional modes was offered to resolve these problems, this was not seen as a viable solution that could be implemented in the immediate future by an extremely large teaching staff using a wide range of teaching methodologies.

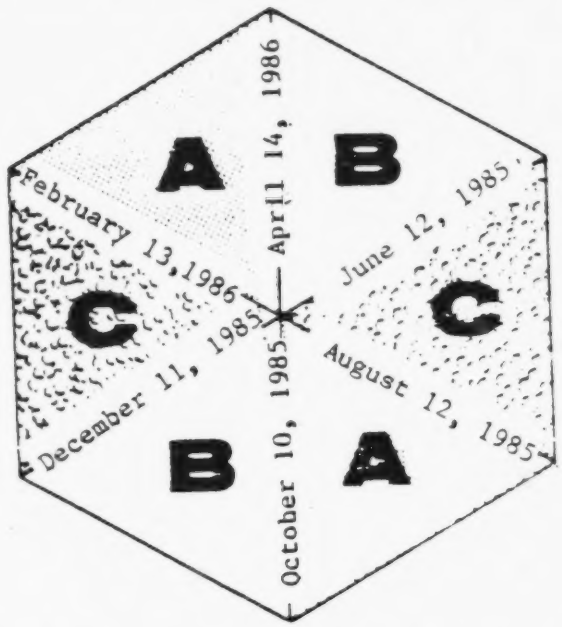
During the course of this investigation there were several outcomes which proved quite useful. Recommendations were developed concerning the characteristics which year-round education plans should possess in this particular K-12 district. Also outlines of four conceptual models which offered feasible solutions for implementation in an entire feeder system were proposed. It was concluded that the ultimate answer for year-round operation had not yet been found and that there was not one plan that would be adopted nation-wide. Plans should be developed within each district according to local needs and community characteristics. Features of a year-round school plan which were found most desirable in Jefferson County were:

1. Voluntary vacations.
2. A flexible school year that provided for both maximum and minimum attendance periods according to individual needs.
3. The capability of using the existing curriculum during phase-in.
4. Cooperative arrangements between elementary and secondary students to allow all family members the same vacation time.
5. The choice of a warm weather and a cool weather vacation.
6. The potentiality of the release of more than 25% of the students to vacation at any particular time for maximum economy in building use.

Five variables were identified which can be manipulated to produce an extended school year schedule. These consisted of the number of attendance terms which students must spend in school, the number of vacation periods available, the number of tracks in which the school population is divided, the percent of students released to vacation at one time, and the number of holidays observed in the continuous school year calendar.

When several models demonstrating different combinations of these elements were drawn up, one particular plan identified as Concept 6 proved to be most acceptable for meeting local needs. The result was a year-round plan which discarded the traditional September through May calendar and replaced it with a calendar which began in August and continued through July. When schools chose to balance the vacation selections of students evenly, it had the effect of producing 50% more classroom space.

Jefferson County's Concept 6 puts school buildings in use 252 days and divides the school year into six terms of instruction. Individual students attend classes four terms and choose their vacations during the other two. An option for a fifth term is available to those who choose it for enrichment, remediation, or acceleration at no expense to the individual. Teachers work the normal 184 day work year, but may choose to teach 225 days when enrollments make it possible. They still have the traditional holidays off, including an extended holiday vacation at Christmas and six other holidays normally observed in the school calendar. A total of eleven holidays are observed during one complete cycle of the calendar.



Six different entry times, as shown above, have the effect of making the curriculum continuously accessible to students throughout the year. These multiple entry times also make it easier for students who must transfer in or out of school to districts with traditional calendars. Students and their parents select either vacation pattern A, B, or C.

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Teachers in Jefferson County work on an 184 day contract year. As the administration continues to use two of the teachers' work days for orientations and inservice, a bonus of ten teaching days remains to give to the education of boys and girls. This bonus of teacher time offers one of the most significant benefits which a year-round schedule can provide for students. Since these ten days may now be used for instruction outside the minimum required program, they will be used by the local schools to present an array of alternative educational experiences which are prescribed to meet the specific needs of students in the local school setting. This time may also be used for conducting staff inservice with large segments of the faculty present at one time or for curriculum development and writing projects when funds are not available to release staff from their normal daily teaching assignments.

Although some schools want to offer bonus learning sessions which conform in length to the regular school day, the option is there to schedule teachers on an hourly basis as long as the ten day commitment is fulfilled. Since student attendance is voluntary, students are scheduled according to individual activity just as they do presently in summer school. In schools where these bonus learning sessions are scheduled on a broad scale it is possible for a student to avail him/herself of every opportunity to attend more than 180 days at no additional expense to the District, without the individual joining another track of students during a fifth term. Students' participation indicates that many will volunteer to

return to school during a vacation term to participate in an extra learning session. Staff members have expressed enthusiasm for the possibilities which the bonus sessions offer. They see potential for developing a broad range of options for the enrichment and humanizing of the curriculum on the one hand, but they also see new hope for the disadvantaged youngster to receive individually prescribed instruction in the basic skills.

A key feature in making Concept 6 desirable to students K-12 is the voluntary vacation choice. There are three basic vacation plans; however, a family may choose any two terms as long as their selections do not seriously alter the balance of enrollments during any one term. Most families will vacation during one of the following three choices:

Vacation Plan A - One vacation from August 12 to October 10 and the other from February 13 to April 14;

Vacation Plan B - One vacation from October 10 to December 11 and the other from April 14 to June 12;

Vacation Plan C - One vacation from June 14 to August 12 and the other from December 11 to February 13.

It can be seen that as many as one-third of the students enrolled may be on vacation at a time. These vacation choices were determined in a geographic area where winter recreation activities are highly popular and where many families have the means to travel more than once a year. Other combinations of vacations could be arranged easily if the interest were to shift by simply rotating the year-round calendar ahead or back a few weeks

according to local preference. Chief among the advantages of Jefferson County's Concept 6 is the fact that it took many of the District's schools off of double session and permitted the construction of new schools to catch up with the burgeoning enrollment.

In September 1968 there were 60,320 students attending school in Jefferson County. This past fall there were more than 75,000. Despite lower birth rates, higher interest rates, and other factors, people continue to move into the Jefferson County School District. How to meet this continuing influx of new students is the major problem. Jefferson County voters consistently approve bond issues to finance new schools and the District supplements this with a pay-as-you-go financing. A new school bond issue was passed in 1984 for 87.7 million dollars. Even with this large levy, it will be several years before sufficient classroom space can be constructed.

Concept 6, in addition to its educational advantages, has the potential to save taxpayers millions of dollars. If all District schools were on this program and if vacation selections were evenly balanced, about 50% more space would be made available in existing schools. When it opened, Columbine High School cost 3.48 million dollars and could accommodate 1,500 students. As its capacity was increased by 50% under Concept 6, this meant that 750 additional student spaces valued a 1.16 million dollars were immediately made available. Initial plans called for only 16 schools in two feeder systems within the District to be involved in the

Concept 6 trial program, but these were two of the most rapid growth areas in the District. Projections presented to the Board of Education indicated enrollment in these two areas alone would increase by more than 4,700 students by September 1977. If even 20% more space could be provided in the two overcrowded feeder systems through Concept 6, it still would save millions of dollars. In those days of rising costs it was a savings which the Board of Education believed could not be overlooked.

But space needs are only temporary no matter how serious they may appear at the moment. Long range improvements in curriculum and instruction must be realized if any year-round education plan is to be permanent. For the past several years it has been a trend in curriculum design to break year long courses down into multiple indepth units of nine weeks of less. Jefferson County has committed itself to the nine-week pattern of curriculum organization where all courses of instruction ultimately will be comprised of performance based elements and will be, whenever possible, nonsequential in nature. The intent here is to make self-paced learning a reality for students and at the same time promote maximum exploration and enrichment. Concept 6 makes it possible for students at all grade levels to be rescheduled or regrouped every nine weeks and at intervals more or less frequent depending upon the philosophy of the school involved. It provides for a modicum of economy in the offering of single selection elec-

tive courses at the secondary level and at the same time allows large teaching teams with differentiated staffing to continue functioning at levels of maximum efficiency.

Although individualization of instruction is a much hoped for outcome of a Concept 6 operation a broader range of curricular activities in individual schools appears certain to result. A bill passed by the Colorado Legislature in 1973 not only enables school districts to pilot year-round school schedules but permits flexibility in the length of the school year for the student. This later provision could possibly have the greatest significance for the educational development of individual boys and girls.

A separate part of the pilot investigation of Concept 6 was the study of the effect of alternative educational activities on pupil progress in a flexible school year which varies from a minimum of 172 days for some students to 184 or more days for others who volunteer to attend an extension of their regular school year. This flexibility in schedule can be operated with no additional expense to the District and requires no significant increase in funding from state revenue. The schools operating the year-round schedules may be funded for each student as if the individual attended 180 days leaving the choice to the individual as to whether he/she will actually attend more or less time through involvement in intersession activities. This new flexibility also allows individual schools to plan

activities in the academic realm which are both remedial or exploratory, or in the activity area which should have a humanizing effect on relationships developed in the school.

Teachers have enjoyed brainstorming sessions wherein they have planned locally the range of activities to be considered. Since each teacher has an additional 10 day commitment in the intersession program each teacher is faced with making a new decision about the special kind of service offered to the school curriculum. Following are a few of the many potential activities which teachers are considering. Small group remedial instruction in reading and math come first in the minds of teachers working with youngsters in the basic skills. They now see an opportunity to diagnose weaknesses of individuals and arrange through communication with parents to have these students for one or two week intervals during winter vacation times. Students needing extra help receive individual attention from teachers who are experts in the basic skill areas.

Gifted students on the other hand receive similar help to further develop their special talents. Others are more interested in performance activities such as drama or music festivals which are presented during intersession times by students participating voluntarily in full range of creative roles. Mini-courses lasting one or two weeks become a practical reality and students may have the latitude of selecting the topics of interest. Special counseling programs during vacation terms can be developed

for students and their parents who need or request special assistance from school staff. A program of home visits can be initiated by local schools to promote better teacher, student, parent understanding and cooperation.

Students may now act as volunteers for community groups needing assistance for worthy causes and they may now arrange for community service experience through the coordination of a school staff member during the time the individual's vacation is in progress. With the two extended vacations occurring during the year for each student, work-study programs can now be expanded to provide students interested in obtaining on-the-job experience more extensive opportunity under the supervision of a teacher coordinator. The District's present foreign travel study program can be expanded to offer greater opportunities for students interested in expanding their knowledge of the language or encountering first hand the culture of other nations through supervised vacation travel.

INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS

When Concept 6 was first presented to the communities for their discussion one of the chief concerns at the secondary level was the effect of a year-round program on interscholastic athletics. Students in Concept 6 schools were accorded the same privilege to participate in activities and athletics which they enjoy in traditionally scheduled schools. Since the Concept 6 vacations occur at various times during year students may parti-

cipate in activities during attendance terms and during vacation terms. Where eligibility rules apply a student must have met the eligibility requirements as of the last day of the school attendance in order to participate during his/her vacation.

Junior or senior high school students will not be permitted to use the flexible vacation choices available under this plan to gain special advantage over students in schools which are on the traditional school calendar. This was an assurance which the state high school athletic association required before giving endorsement to the plan. A Concept 6 student will not be allowed to take consecutive vacation terms to permit them to be on vacation during an entire sport season. Students must be enrolled full time during a significant portion of the season in which he/she plans to participate. Activities which normally take place during vacation terms such as musical and dramatic productions or athletic camps will continue. Such activities may well become part of the intersession program which the school can schedule more formally and which can be made available to a broader range of students than in the past.

COMMUNITY OPINION SURVEY

When a school district contemplates a change in operations as unfamiliar to the community as a year-round calendar, discretion suggests the need for a survey of community attitude toward the proposal before it is tried. An extensive attitudinal survey conducted in late November and early December of 1972 as part of a feasibility study done by the Jefferson County, Colorado School District disclosed a remarkably high degree of acceptance of the idea of a continuous school year. This study prepared by a professional opinion polling firm was conducted as a result of nearly two years of study and planning.

A public information campaign lasting three months used both the public media and local community groups for presenting the conceptual model to as many of the local citizenry as possible. Local radio and television stations willingly joined in the effort to explain features of the program through panel discussions, talk shows, and documentary presentations. Whenever the public media took an editorial stand on Concept 6 it was usually positive and supportive of the year-round school design. When the opinion polling firm reported its results the plan was strongly endorsed by both parents and school employees.

Throughout the District 80% of the parents of school age children and 79% of the staff said they would be in favor of such a plan for their children and would be willing to "Give it a try." Structured personal in-

terviews were used to gain the opinions of parents while opinions of employees were obtained through a written questionnaire. A scientific sampling of respondents of both "audiences" was employed to ensure valid information from the poll.

Primary reasons for conducting the survey were not only to determine the climate of opinion regarding year-round education but to determine where a pilot project might best be tried. The Jefferson County School District has been divided into 12 elementary through high school feeder systems. When two of these 12 areas registered a significantly high degree of interest in the concept then a follow-up study was prepared to measure total community attitude and to gain specific data for implementation. Chief among the concerns of the study committee was the question as to whether the vacation choices of parents would be distributed through the four seasons of the year. Although parents and school employees tended to favor the vacation period that most closely coincides with the present vacation time under the traditional school calendar there was a significant interest in vacations during every month of the year.

The two most interested communities indicated that 20% of their students would be on vacation during the least selected season of the year if parents were given a choice. This 20% reduction in pupil load meant that considerable savings in plant construction could be realized if pupils

were released on a continuous option to vacation any season. It meant that also a more varied and flexible curriculum could be offered continuously throughout 250 days of the year for the benefit of pupils and teachers.

One action taken as a result of the survey was a change of the particular dates on which the Concept 6 terms began and ended. At the time of the survey, June 17 through August 26, constituted a most preferred vacation time and this seemed to reduce the feasibility of obtaining balanced enrollments during each of the three voluntary vacation plans. By simply shifting the calendar so the summer was divided at August 11, two equally desirable warm weather vacations were created. The results of this survey were presented to the Jefferson County Board of Education as part of the evidence upon which to base their decision for implementing a year-round school project. Since the attitudinal survey was based upon a limited random sample of parents in the various communities some question was raised by citizens as to its validity. This has been a common place objection raised by citizens when other community surveys were conducted. In an effort to validate the report and satisfy questions raised by some citizens a postcard survey was conducted late in the winter of 1973. Postcards were sent to the household of every student enrolled in the potential pilot areas. A 53% return was achieved and although the results were less dramatically in favor of the project there was still strong support with 66% of the respondents favoring Concept 6 and 27% voting against it. The vacation patterns on which this survey was based were as follows: Vacation Pattern

A, June 27 through August 26 and January 2 to March 1; Plan B, March 1 to April 30 and August 26 to October 23; Plan C, October 23 to January 2 and April 30 to June 27. These dates were subsequently changed.

CONCEPT 6 ADVISORY COMMITTEES

When parents throughout the District were asked in the public opinion survey about the possibility of having parents serve on the Jefferson County Concept 6 Advisory Committees, eight out of ten interviewed supported the idea. As a result, all schools in the two pilot feeder systems were asked to recommend persons to serve on Advisory Committees for each area.

These local school representatives who served on the Area Advisory Committees included parents, students, principals, teachers, and other school employees. Their names were listed in a newsletter to parents and distributed through the pilot area. The two advisory committees from each of the feeder systems met monthly to offer advice, to act as a community sounding board, to identify areas of concern, and to react to Concept 6 implementation plans as they were developed. Members of the committees were also responsible for assisting in distributing Concept 6 information to their local school committees.

Members from these two area committees joined members of the original year-round school study committee which developed Concept 6 to make up a central coordinating committee. The central committee helped coordinate

plans for the program in both of the pilot feeder systems during the two year pilot program. The central committee also met on the second Monday of each month. It was anticipated that the participation of these parents, students, and school staff members would facilitate a smooth trouble free transition to the year-round school calendar.

EVALUATION OF THE PILOT PROGRAM

In the Board resolution which initiated the year-round school program there was a stipulation that a comprehensive evaluation be conducted during the pilot phase. An evaluation plan which was developed and implemented reflected input from the Coordinating Committee and contained three major thrusts, educational feasibility, economic feasibility, and community attitudes.

The educational feasibility study was conducted by the District staff. Academic growth in the basic skills was of prime concern. Accordingly, it was decided that pre and post pilot test expanded test scores derived from the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS) compare the two year growth of year-round students with the growth of students attending school on the traditional calendar. Pre and post data from the District's criterion testing program in the areas of reading and mathematics were also used to compare the progress of year-round and traditional year students.

Other indicators used to determine equity were comparative drop-out statistics, attendance, within District transfers, and availability of curriculum.

Another component of the educational feasibility study addressed the question of student participation in extended learning opportunities. Provisions were made for two types of extended learning. First, short courses entitled "Bonus Learning" were established at each school. These varied in length from one to eight days and in time from one period or hour per day to all day. In terms of content they ranged from remediation in a basic skill to extended field trips. Second, provisions were made for students to enroll for a "fifth term." Students had the option of taking either single courses or a full day of instruction. Fifth term courses were open on a first come, first served and space available basis. The evaluation plan was designed to document the number of students who took advantage of the extended educational opportunities.

An economic feasibility study was done to determine whether or not the year-round schools could be operated within the per pupil cost range of the traditional schools, whether energy consumption would be significantly affected by operation of schools on the year-round calendar, and the costs for the use of facilities (depreciation).

For operational cost study purposes only those costs which could be identified directly with the individual schools were included. Operational costs at the building level included teachers' salaries, material and sup-

ply monies, salaries of all personnel assigned to the building with the exception of special education personnel, utilities, and the costs of custodial services. Excluded from the study were transportation, costs of special education, central administrative services such as printing, testing personnel, and curriculum development. Price Waterhouse, an independent auditing agency, was contracted to conduct this economic study.

The firm of Research Service, Inc. of Denver was engaged to conduct the community attitudes study during each of the pilot years. Random sampling techniques were used to assess the attitudes of parents, employees, and secondary school students. Expanded samples were drawn from pilot areas. The assessment of employees, both certificated and classified, and of students was accomplished through the use of a questionnaire. Personal interviews were conducted with the parents and householders whose names were selected through the sampling process.

FINDINGS OF THE EVALUATION

Extensive reports were prepared for each of the feasibility studies. The primary findings of each of the studies are highlighted below.

Educational Feasibility:

--- Academic growth in the basic skills for students in the year-round program was commensurate with that of tradition year students.

--- The number and percentage of secondary students who dropped out of school in the pilot areas decreased during the two-year pilot period.

--- Attendance, membership, and student transfers were not affected by the changes from a traditional year to the year-round calendar.

--- The total District instructional program was available to students although careful planning was required to assure its availability.

--- Student and staff morale was positive.

--- The year-round calendar did accommodate multiple entrance dates and ages for kindergarten and first grade students.

--- Bonus learning activities and fifth term classes were well attended.

--- School related activities such as parent-teacher conferences, student orientation, District-wide testing, etc. could be accommodated.

Economic Feasibility:

--- The annual per-pupil operating costs at the school level fell within the range of the same costs for the traditional year students.

--- The lowest and highest average per-pupil operating costs occurred in the traditional attendance areas.

--- The average electrical energy consumption per square foot was 42% greater in the year-round areas, but only 20% greater when computed on a per-pupil basis.

--- The average fuel consumption per square foot was 4% more in the year-round schools but approximately 11% less when computed on a per-pupil basis.

Community Attitudes:

--- When asked their opinion about the solution to overcrowded schools respondents from all householders in the District favored year-round schools over construction of new buildings by a margin of 2 to 1. Arvada West and Columbine parents and teachers favored year-round schools by 2 to 1.

--- In the Pomona area (on the traditional calendar) parents favored "more buildings" over year-round schools by a margin of 2 to 1.

--- Nine out of ten students felt the year-round school program has a positive effect on crowded conditions in their schools.

--- Vacation problems identified with the year-round school calendar were largely discounted by parents involved in the program.

--- Seven of ten year-round school parents said they were completely satisfied with the schedule for holidays.

--- One of three (35%) said the main asset of the year-round program is its "economy," but parents exposed to the plan are more inclined also to praise the advantages of "short-term vacations," "less time lost between terms," and "smaller classes."

--- One of three year-round school students said they had participated in bonus learning sessions but fewer than half as many (14%) Track B students had been involved.

--- Two students in ten reported they had taken some kind of fifth term course to enrich or accelerate their education.

CONCLUSIONS

Based upon the above findings it was concluded that the year-round school program does provide a viable alternative for meeting the student housing needs in growth areas. As a result of the studies and the recommendation of the staff, the Board of Education extended the year-round program to two growth areas, Bear Creek and Pomona, effective with the 1977-78 school year.

The Board of Education also requested the development of a proposed general policy as to when year-round education would be considered for implementation or discontinued within an attendance area and a plan to

continue data collection for further evaluation of the year-round program. Future findings would identify advantages and/or disadvantages not yet documented which could alter the current practice of using year-round education for the purpose of meeting student housing needs.

EXPANSION OF THE PROGRAM

The Jefferson County District decided during its feasibility study that the year-round plan was the best alternative for housing students in rapidly growing attendance areas while its capability for constructing new schools was limited to pay-as-you-go construction or small bond fund projects. It was assumed that when adequate additional school facilities could be constructed the schools would revert to the conventional school calendar. As each of the four growth areas of the District expanded all of the schools within the K-12 feeder systems were placed on the year-round calendar. In 1977 as many as one-third of the District's 115 schools were operated on the year-round calendar. For each two new classrooms built at that time the District gained one classroom free by placing all new schools on the extended year calendar. Although the District has always regarded the year-round program as a temporary solution to the space problem the savings in capital construction costs have been real and it would be several years before it would be possible to house all students on a conventional school year plan.

As each of the original K-12 feeder systems have grown older the rate of growth has slackened. With the decline in school population it became possible to take some schools off the multi-track year-round schedule and accommodate students within the existing school space. In each instance where this has occurred, however, the biggest surprise of the year-round effort occurred. Parents would not go back to the nine month school year after experiencing the year-round calendar and the pattern of multiple vacations each year. Instead, they pressed for placing all children on one of the attendance tracks most preferred in the year-round plan and with some modification have chosen this as their permanent school calendar.

TERMINATION OF THE MULTI-TRACK YEAR ROUND PLAN

In October of 1984 the taxpayer revolt against new school construction costs ended in Jefferson County. It became possible to pass an 87.8 million dollar bond election, the largest in the history of the state. This bond fund was intended to finance the construction of all the school space needed to house the total membership of the District without using alternative means of accommodating the enrollment. It meant also that students in schools on multi-track year-round schedules would now revert to a single track schedule as the new buildings are constructed. By 1989 all the schools of the District will have discontinued the space saving altern-

ative. The information which follows offers some conclusions and recommendations which were learned from the eleven year experience with year-round education.

In order to determine the feasibility of a bond election campaign a community attitude survey was done to evaluate the extent of community acceptance of the idea in 1984. Comparison data from previous years was available for measuring any significant change in community attitude that might have occurred over the past ten years. It should be noted that when bond campaigns failed in the early 1970's in the District the failure was attributed to a prevailing attitude that other options such as year-round schools were seen as better solutions for housing pupils.

A survey of Jefferson County residents was conducted in the fall of 1984 to determine their response to the question "If the school district needs to build new schools, is it OK to finance their construction by issuing bonds?" By this time the attitude had changed with 72% of the respondents answering "Yes" to the question and only 13% answering "No." Following this a second question was asked. "To ease overcrowding in the schools, is it better to build new schools than operate existing schools on a year-round schedule?" Only 39% of the respondents answered "Yes" to this question while 50% answered "No" and 12% were undecided. The interpretation of these responses was that there was still support for year-round schools even though the community was ready to build new schools wherever they were needed. When Jefferson County residents were asked to state

reasons why they intended to vote "For" the proposed bond issue 93% stated reasons which were generally supportive of the District. Only 8% stated that they wished to see an erd to year-round schools.

BENEFITS GAINED FROM THE YEAR ROUND SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

The benefits gained from the year-round school experience can be classified as either economic or educational although many teachers feel that life style benefits were the most significant. Certainly the program was successful in accomplishing its intended purpose. In 1977 the construction cost of the facilities saved was estimated at $45,000,000. In 1985 the amount of the bond fund destined to replace this alternative for student housing was placed at $87,700,000. Following is a list of other benefits acknowledged by administrators who have been closely involved with the program from the beginning:

G. Economic Benefits

1. Gain in use of facilities of 50%;
2. No surplus school buildings in declining neighborhoods;
3. Savings in bonded indebtedness of the District;
4. Opportunity to pay some teachers 20% more salary for teaching a fifth term at no increased cost to the District.
5. Saved cost of cross-District busing.

H. Educational Benefits

1. Greater involvement of teachers in planning and developing activities through the use of bonus learning time;
2. More innovative climate in year-round school faculties;
3. More extensive enrichment activities in schools, both secondary and elementary. Fifth term option was excellent at the high school.
4. More initiative from principals and staff for school based planning;
5. Maintenance of stable school environments in rapidly growing neighborhoods.
6. Elimination of the need for double sessions.
7. Decreased dropout rate at the secondary level.
8. Reduced teacher and pupil burn out, especially at the elementary level;
9. Creation of more intense learning environment.

I. Other Effects

1. Shortened summer vacation and lengthened winter vacation in traditional school calendar as a spin-off from the year-round experience;
2. Preserved the neighborhood school concept.

REASONS FOR TERMINATING MULTI-TRACK YEAR-ROUND SCHOOLS

Although a number of reasons can be offered for discontinuing the year-round program most of them are only incidental. There were, however, two significant reasons. First, there was from the beginning a failure to recognize that the work load of the year-round school principal was a greater burden than conventional schools and appropriate additional compensation is necessary in order to retain vital administrative support. Second, there was always approximately 30% opposition to the year-round program and this opposition group was persistent in arguing its case with each new administration over the years. Other reasons for the change are the following:

A. Changes in Community Conditions
   1. Decline in rate of growth in pupil enrollments;
   2. Improvement in District capability to pass bond elections for the construction of new schools;
   3. Stable enrollments in some schools did not permit track changes.

B. Changes in Staff Attitude
   1. Loss of enthusiasm by school administrators;
   2. Changes in administrative staff of year-round program at secondary level;
   3. Desire of some high school teachers to have all students present at one time.

C. New Priorities

1. Changing teachers on a quarterly basis at the high school level was perceived as lacking instructional continuity;
2. Decline in test scores at one high school;
3. Failure to address high school concerns over communications problems with students an teachers;
4. Recent concern over the length of the school year and desire for increasing instructional time.
5. The Modified C schedule was seen as more desirable to the community than the three-track year-round schedule;
6. Changes in priorities of community leadership.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OTHERS CONTEMPLATING YEAR-ROUND SCHOOL PROGRAMS

The essence of a successful year-round school program centers around adequate communications with the public, selection of supportive staff, and maintaining the support of the principal. Following is a more detailed itemization:

A. Communicate your purposes and publicize your successes.

1. Make it clear in the beginning whether the purpose is to save costs in facilities or to improve instruction.
2. Identify educational advantages to be achieved and aggressively pursue them in all attendance tracks.

3. Publicize community recreation and youth group activities for off track students to enhance year-round participation.

4. Work with realtors to give accurate information to new families.

B. Select and train staff that will support the program.

1. Select administrators and staff who are committed to developing and sustaining the year-round concepts.

2. Involve staff in planning for a year-round operation so they will have ownership.

3. Have very strong processes of communication for teachers, parents, and students during their off-track time.

4. Use teachers to modify curriculum and encourage teachers' ownership.

5. Permit administrators and teachers in year-round schools to develop regulations and support systems which are appropriate for their situations.

C. Reaffirm administrative support.

1. Recognize that any expansion in building capacity must be accompanied by an expansion of administrative costs, staff, and resources.

2. Guarantee the support and delivery of equitable services all year from the central office staff.

3. Support local school administration in all track assignments, changes, and operational decisions.